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Damakawa language

Damakawa is a moribund Benue–Congo language of northwest Nigeria. There are no longer any speakers of the language, although the oldest people can remember a few words. Approximately 80 or so words and phrases were collected, with difficulty, in April 2008 (the language seems to have been unknown to linguists until then).[3]

The Damakawa have shifted to the nearby larger language C'Lela, and it is likely that all, or almost all of them, also speak the lingua franca Hausa. The Hausa name for the ethnic group is also Damakawa.

Damakawa	
Native to	Nigeria
Region	Kebbi State
Ethnicity	500–1,000 (2008)[1]
Extinct	20th century[1]
Language family	Niger–Congo ▪ Atlantic–Congo ▪ Benue–Congo ▪ Kainji ▪ Northwest Kainji ▪ **Damakawa**
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	dam
Glottolog	dama1268 (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/dama1268)[2]

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Classification

Based on such a small amount of data of uncertain reliability, it is hard to classify Damakawa precisely. It is probably best placed in the Northwest Kainji branch of Benue–Congo. The words that have been collected show similarities with both C'Lela and Kambari languages, and it may be that the Kambari words are loans or mis-rememberings.

Alternative names

The nearby Cicipu speakers call the Damakawa language 'Tidama'un'. In the trade language Hausa the expected name for the language would be Damakanci, given the people are called Damakawa. However Damakawa seems to be preferred by the Damakawa themselves, as far as can be ascertained.

Geographic distribution

The Damakawa people probably number about 500-1000, and live in three or four villages near Maganda in Sakaba Local Government Area, Kebbi State.

References

1. ISO change request (http://www-01.sil.org/iso639-3/cr_files/2008-041_dam.pdf)

2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Damakawa" (http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/dama1268). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. McGill, Stuart. 2008. The Damakawa language. Unpublished manuscript. (http://www.cicipu.org/papers/damakawa.pdf).

- Blench, Roger (2012). "The Kainji languages of northwestern and central Nigeria" (http://www.rogerblench.info/Language/Niger-Congo/BC/Kainji/General/Kainji%20language%20overview.pdf) (PDF). Cambridge: Kay Williamson Educational Foundation.

External links

- ISO 639-3 Request for new language code (http://www.sil.org/ISO639-3/cr_files/2008-041_dam.pdf)

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